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THE GLORIOUS POWER WITHIN US

by Movses B. Janbazian



Rev. Movses B. Janbazian

This year, the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide comes soon after two events that constitute the most recent of the countless disappointments Armenians have had in their long quest for a recognition of the injustice committed against their nation.

First, in early February, the President of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev, arbitrarily declared that the Armenian enclave of Artzak (Nagorno-Karabagh) is "an inseparable part of Azerbaijan." With a view to pleasing the Azerbaijanis and other Islamic-Turkic nations in and around the USSR and securing their approval of his neo-communist policies, Gorbachev repeated Joseph Stalin's crime which he himself had previously described as a "historic mistake"—for the sake of expediency, he denied the Armenians of Artzak their legitimate right of self-determination.

Second, in late March, the President of Turkey, Turgut Ozal, visited the United States to demand compensation for Turkey's "participation and faithfulness" in the coalition's war against Iraq. And, although Turkey did not send any soldiers to the war, Ozal was able to extract many millions of American taxpayers' dollars. But money was not the only reward Ozal demanded and received. Ozal's booty also included American aid in Turkey's war against Armenians—an oath of silence by U.S. government officials regarding the Armenian Genocide and their support for Turkey's attempts to distort the

historical facts about the systematic annihilation of Armenians by the Turks. One immediate result was the U.S. State Department's order to the National Park Service to remove from an Ellis Island exhibit a photograph depicting victims of the Armenian Genocide.

Incidents as these cause bitter disappointment not only to Armenians, but also to people throughout the world who value truth and justice. These and similar events expose the demagoguery of the leaders of the world's two most powerful nations, who claim to be in pursuit of a "new world order" and a policy of "glasnost" and "perestroika", while in reality they are simply pursuing their own perceived or misperceived self-interest, ever ready to trample truth, commit injustice and deny the legitimate rights of victimized peoples in order to achieve a short-term advantage.

For many Armenians and other Christians, events like these may also result in a frustrating sense of helplessness against the "powers, principalities and rulers of the darkness of this world."

That need not be the case, however. In II Corinthians, Chapter 4, the Apostle Paul, soon after admitting that we, as Christians, are limited, fragile and weak creatures, teaches us that as part of God's

people, we possess a "glorious power" which is superior to any force in the world. It was because of his awareness of that inner "glorious power" that the Apostle could say, "we are pressed on every side by troubles, but not crushed and broken. We are perplexed because we do not know why things happen as they do, but we do not give up and quit. We are hunted down, but God never abandons us. We get knocked down, but we get up again and keep going. And we know that the same God who brought the Lord Jesus back from death will also bring us back to life again with Jesus." (II Cor. 4: 8-10, 14).

We who share the Apostle's faith can and should give the same testimony. Yes, "we are perplexed because we do not know why things happen as they do, but we do not give up and quit. . ."

Indeed, Jesus is alive and He is in pursuit of His mission in the world, "announcing that captives shall be released and the blind shall see; that the downtrodden shall be freed from their oppressors." And as long as we live in Jesus and walk with Him closely, the same God who raised Him from the dead will empower us to triumph over all the evil forces that cause us despair, trying to undermine our strivings for peace and justice.

OUR JOB IS PEACE

In time of war, different people have different jobs to do: Congress sets policy, the President acts as Commander-in-Chief, generals plot strategy, journalists keep us informed, armed forces do the fighting, medical personnel treat casualties, merchants sell patriotic material, pollsters sample public opinion, and so on.

As for the church, our job is to promote peace.

As church people, bound together by the love of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, our job is to hold our country to the highest virtues, to press for patience, to plead for time to let the sanctions work,

to urge negotiations, to expose hypocrisy.

When military officials brag about how smart their bombs are, who questions the smartness of leaders who resort to bombs before all other options have been exhausted? When they report how many tanks have been destroyed, who will remind us of the soldiers killed who were in those tanks? When news-casters tell of massive "carpet bombing" over huge stretches of land, who else will ask, "How many human beings were under that carpet?" When politicians talk about "collateral damage," who will remind us that they are disguising civilians killed and destruction of non-military targets? When

we hear of so many "human remains pouches" being prepared, who will point out that those are body bags for real people, husbands and brothers, daughters and mothers, who never again will smile at a child or hold a loved one close?

When analysts count the financial cost of being at war, who will question the human costs of not being at peace, of a generation cut down, of funds no longer available, of children learning that violence is acceptable for solving problems?

When the president says, "And may God bless the United States of America," who will call for prayers for all of the people of God, in the homeland of the enemy as well as in ours?

The world has no shortage of people willing to beat the drums, rouse the citizenry or send others off to war. What the world does not have is enough people willing to bear the burden of peace-making. Hence the crucial role of the church.

When generals say, "War is hell!" we

say, "Exactly!" But our marching orders come from a God of heaven, from a book with visions of a peaceable kingdom where people beat swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, and nations do not learn war any more.

Such a vision may indeed pass all human understanding. But as a goal to work toward, it surely beats war. That's why our job is peace.

W. Evan Golder
Editor, UCC News

MAKING HONEY FROM GALL

by Elizabeth Caraman Payne

I was born in the Christian village of Habouse in central Turkey in the valley of the Euphrates. As a child I heard stories of the 1894-96 Turkish massacres, when nearly all of my father's relatives were killed. Then came news of the massacres in Adana in 1910. In this my cousin Thomas and many hundreds were killed. From August 1914 when Turkey entered World War I, we began to hear of more massacres. Then in April 1915 began the Armenian holocaust in which nearly two million Armenian were massacred, including my father. We could not take time to mourn.

"We must escape tonight," my mother told me and my younger sister Acabie. All that day and evening my mother remained tearless in the midst of our weeping villagers. She recited one Bible verse after another to comfort them. "Look up to your heavenly Father for help. Don't shun death or accept Mohammed. Oh, how I wish I could stay and drink the cup of suffering with you."

I shall never forget how my heart ached when Aunt Zedug, my father's sister, hugged and kissed me, saying, "Your father and the rest of us will be looking for you in heaven. Don't ever be afraid of death. Your father told us that if God thinks it best for us to die, he'll give us the strength to bear the suffering. If it is His will for us to live He'll find the way."

Our friend Aly Bey placed eight-year-old Acabie in a saddle box on one side of the donkey and me on the other, with

mother astride. He set out on the horse.

Through the long night we rode. In the early dawn we saw Housenig, my mother's birthplace. It looked serene and peaceful from a distance. But the view was deceptive. Upon arriving at the outskirts of the city we were met with cries of women and children lamenting the deportation of their men.

Amid a funereal silence we entered my grandparents' home. Grandma looked to be a hundred, all life drained from her. Aunt Maritza, Mother's older sister, told us the men and boys had been driven out, deported, and that one of Grandfather's Turkish friends had murdered him. We were all to be deported.

Within a week or so Mother and I set out for Mezre, the capital of the province. Her plan was to try to place me in a Turkish home as a servant. We went from house to house, but the doors closed upon us as though we carried the plague. At last, one Hanum (Turkish wife) took me as a servant. She had two teen-aged sons, and within days she was to go to the house of a sick relative. While she was gone the elder son tried to rape me. I fled, running almost all of the four miles to Grandmother's house.

In the meantime, Mother had placed Acabie in a home, and she was hopeful of finding one for herself. She found a Turkish home for me near my sister, then courageously took leave of me again.

The following morning, Hanum brought out some dress material from



Elizabeth Caraman Payne

which she hoped to make a dress for me. Just then my mother knocked at the door. Hanum at once invited her in and they embraced each other. Mother had good news! She had found employment at a home one street over. All three of us shed joyous tears. Then Mother saw Hanum needed help with my dress, and Hanum welcomed it, for she had never made a dress for a girl.

As soon as we were out of Hanum's sight, Mother took me in her arms. She looked up and prayed, "Thank you, our heavenly Father, for keeping us safe thus far." Then she kissed both my cheeks and, pointing to a house nearby, told me it was the home of Syrian Christians. "If you need help, go to them."

The next time I saw my mother she said, "Tomorrow I have to choose either deportation or Mohammed."

"Where will they deport you?" I asked tearfully.

"You are sure, then, that I shall choose deportation. Praise the Lord! Now you must go and pray that I will do just that. I must go and get dinner."

At times like these it is unbelievable how the very name of Jesus and faith in him gives strength and courage! Not only to face such trials, but also, as Aunt Zedug used to say so often, "God teaches us how to make honey from gall."

The next afternoon I met Mother at Acabie's house. When we got to her place she at once had me try on my new dress. "It appears that this will be the last dress I shall ever make for you. When you wear it remember that with every stitch I made a prayer for you two girls. So I am sure God will guide and protect you both."

Wherever I went that evening I prayed for Mother. Especially when I was drawing water from the well in the garden. I

could look up and see God sitting peacefully on his throne. That at once brought to mind what my father had said so often in times of great danger. "Let us remember God is on his throne. We have nothing to fear."

One afternoon Acabie and I went to see Mother. She took us to the kitchen and, sitting on the dirt floor, held us close. There was no other person in the house—just us two girls wrapped in the loving arms of our dear Mother.

Acabie patted Mother's cheeks and broke the awesome silence, "Mama, I sure will miss you. But when I think of how happy Daddy will be to see you, I can swallow the lump in my throat. And thank you, Mama, for finding a home for Yegsabet and me. Will you and Daddy watch over us from God's palace?"

"What comforting words, dear, dear Acabie! Thank you very much, my dear children. These are the times when God

gives us his secret of making honey from gall. Praise him for his many mysterious secrets which he freely gives to all believers."

She wrapped her arms about each of us in one last embrace. Such was our goodbye.

The next day Hanum and I started early for our trip to a nearby village. When we returned, Hanum suggested I visit Acabie at once. When the door opened Acabie ran to me weeping. Between sobs she recounted what had taken place. She and her Hanum had watched the exile line file by. Among them she had seen Mother. Acabie had run to her arms, begging that she might go along. But Acabie's Hanum had dragged her away. Then Mother was gone, never to be seen or heard of again. But our memory of her has sustained us two girls down through the long, long years. Praise the Lord for her noble life and death.

JUDGMENT UNTO TRUTH

WITNESSING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Ephraim K. Jernazian, translated by Alice Haig
With an introduction by Vahakn N. Dadrian

This dramatic personal narrative is a unique contribution to understanding past and current events in the Near East. These memoirs of an Armenian Protestant clergyman reveal little known aspects of major events in Asia Minor in the early twentieth century, give valuable insights into their background, and describe pivotal interrelationships with the western world. Those perceptions are woven into the story of the author's protracted genocidal experiences. Dispassionately rendered, *Judgment Unto Truth* is a call for truth and justice.

In the Hamidian massacres of 1895, Jernazian, a five-year-old orphan, loses two brothers. When all the Armenian Protestant clergy of Cilicia are killed in the Young Turks' "Adana massacre" of 1909, Jernazian answers the call to replenish the vacant pulpits. In 1915, when the "final solution to the Armenian question" is in progress, the author, an interpreter of the Turkish government, is in a unique position to observe the genocidal process. Afterwards, he and his new bride work to rehabilitate destitute survivors. He serves as liaison and advisor during the British and French occupations (1919-21). And during the Kemalist revolution (1921-23), Jernazian loses his remaining family and very nearly his own life. Only through a miraculous escape after twenty-one months in a Turkish prison is he reunited with his wife, her mother, a daughter, and a son born three months after his arrest.

An unusual blend of religious idealism and pragmatic politics, his memoirs provide a singular emotional experience. As Vahakn Dadrian observes in his Introduction, "This volume is a unique document of historical significance. . . . The author presents comments and interpretations which portray him as an acute observer of intricate events." The book will appeal to historians of the period, educators, and professionals with an interest in the use and abuse of state power, and specialists interested in human behavior in extreme conditions.

Advance comments:

"Indispensable reading for anyone interested in Armenian and Near Eastern history, the missionary movement in the Ottoman Empire, and the process of genocide. Jernazian witnesses the Genocide at the intersection of biography and history; his book is at once a chronicle of and a tribute to the individual and collective will to resist and survive."—Gerard J. Libaridian, Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation.

"It has powerful passages and is of significance to the Armenian community and beyond."—Ben H. Bagdikian, University of California, Berkeley.

Ephraim K. Jernazian (1890-1971) experienced the events described in this book. After 1923 he served as pastor and community leader in New York, New England, and California.

Alice Haig, Reverend Jernazian's daughter, translated these memoirs from the original Armenian in consultation with her father while he was living.

Available from the AMAA Bookservice Program.

ARMENIAN NATIONALISM AND THE FERMENT OF FAITH

by Vigen Guroian

Editor's note: This article is reprinted by permission from the February 17, 1991, issue of *The Christian Century*. Dr. Vigen Guroian is Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics at Loyola College in Baltimore, Maryland.

In August, 1990, Mikhail S. Gorbachev sent a message to His Holiness Vazken I, Catholicos of All Armenians, pleading with him "to use the influence, authority, rich life experience and the higher feelings of your humanitarianism and your responsibility for the fate of the Armenian people, to work for the immediate ending of ethnic violence and fighting in the Transcaucasian region." The message revealed the deep historical and cultural relationship of the Armenian Church to the Armenian nation. It was also a reminder of the long-established Soviet practice of prevailing upon that church to assist the central government in imposing its policies.

This dual role for the church—self-described soul of the nation and partner with the Soviet authorities—developed not only under Soviet rule but over half a millennium of Ottoman domination. Over the years the Armenian Church learned simultaneously to sanctify the existing social and political order and represent itself as the one institution above all others upon which the well-being of the Armenian people depended. The Soviet authorities built upon and modified this dual role to suit their own purposes.

The Armenian Church, in turn, internalized the Soviet bureaucratic structure and gave the regime unqualified public support. Over the past 70 years Armenian hierarchs have labored to link the communist myth of the Bolshevik revolution and a fraternity of Soviet peoples with the Armenian national-religious myth of a people born out of the church and nurtured in that church's bosom. The central symbol of the latter myth is also a historical fact. The fourth-century Armenian kingdom was the first to establish Christianity as a state religion.

As late as February, 1988, in the midst of the heated national movement to annex the autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabagh, Vazken I could be heard draw-

ing together the Soviet and Armenian myths. During an interview published in the Moscow newspaper *Moskovsky Novosti* he said: "Mutual respect and trust form the basis of relations between the church and the state. There is no evidence to prove otherwise." He invoked the powerful symbol of the Armenian homeland with "Etchmiadzin as the headquarters of the spiritual life" of Armenians everywhere. He boasted of full churches that attracted believers and nonbelievers alike, thus proving that the church is so intertwined with the traditions of the people that it stands with them as witness to the fact that "we are a people, we prevailed and we conquered."

The behavior of the church since the elevation of Vazken I in 1955 might be described as pragmatic accommodation—a middle position in a spectrum ranging from total obeisance to and collaboration with the state at one end to minimal support and evasion of state restrictions at the other. Through this pragmatic accommodation, the Armenian hierarchy sought to preserve a traditional moral and liturgical role in the national life. The price paid for even such a symbolic role has been a static, secularized, ecclesial body largely gutted of any deep piety or serious theology. In 1972, a decade before Gorbachev and *glasnost*, the Armenian Church had only six bishops, eight monks, about 30 archimandrites and roughly 100 priests in all of the Soviet Union. These served 3.5 to 4 million Soviet Armenians. The church figures have not changed significantly, though hopes are high for the future. There are, for example, only 33 operating churches in the whole of Armenia today for over 3 million Armenians. There is no real theology being done. As author Claire Seda Mouradian commented in a recent article on the Armenian Church: "One looks in vain for essays about christology, ecclesiology, or Christian morality." Problems of dogma, rites and liturgy are dealt with almost exclusively "from a national and secular view, in the context of the quest for the historical patrimony."

Yet despite the Armenian Church's

stagnation, something quite remarkable has been happening in Armenia amid the political issues, Nagorno-Karabagh, and especially the pogroms in Azerbaijan and the catastrophic earthquake of December 1988. A religious awakening is under way. There is little statistical data to support this theory. Most of what is known about it in the West comes by way of diaspora Armenians traveling to and from Armenia. It is not difficult to verify, however, that hundreds of baptisms are done each week at the See of Holy Etchmiadzin, the historic birthplace of Armenian Christianity. I saw the building in which these baptisms occur during a recent visit. On that occasion, a former student of mine who recently completed a year of training at the seminary in Etchmiadzin explained to me how hundreds of people line up on the weekends to be baptized. In streets and marketplaces people can be seen wearing shiny new Armenian crosses. Vazken I has pointed out that 70 percent of all infants are now being baptized, compared with 20 percent 30 years ago.

While in Armenia I visited St. Sarkis Church, the home parish of the bishop of Yerevan, Karekin Nersissian. In recent months vesper services have been held at St. Sarkis on Wednesday and Friday evenings, followed either by a lecture from a seminarian or priest on a religious topic or, more frequently, by choral practice. The entire parish is the choir. On the evening I was there the parish was earnestly rehearsing for a visit from representatives of the World Council of Churches. The rehearsal was profoundly moving: I was struck by the enormous crowd, the small children, the people's piety and reverence before icons and crosses.

Armenia's religious awakening is by no means uniform, however. The new religious ferment takes a variety of forms, including a minority Catholic community and Hare Krishna sects. During the 19th century, Protestant missionaries made considerable headway among Armenians who had been discouraged by the deadening traditionalism of the Armenian Church. That Protestant evan-

gelical movement has persisted in the Western diaspora, with congregations in most of the major centers of Armenian diaspora life. Within Armenia itself Protestant Christianity could pose a significant challenge to the Armenian Church. It is viewed already by some church leaders as not merely a challenge but a threat, and it may well become so. Even Orthodox Armenian believers exude an evangelical piety which, if sufficiently frustrated by an ossified Orthodoxy, could be won over by a lively and experimental Protestantism. The vast majority of Armenians will most likely remain with the Armenian Church, though the shape that church might take in the future is an open question.

The Armenian Church did not have to cope with religious pluralism during the Soviet period. Ironically, it was effectively shielded from it by the state's official atheism. Meanwhile, the Soviets tolerated a church willing to reduce its public expressions to a minimalistic ritualism and willing to cooperate with the authorities. In exchange, the church was allowed a monopoly of religious institutional presence. The result is a church as ill prepared to compete in a religious free market as the Communist Party is in a political one. In fact, the last place the Soviet structure remains totally intact in Armenia is the Armenian Church. Likewise, the last place democratization is understood is within the church, even though in theory and by constitution the Armenian Church is among the most democratic of the Orthodox churches.

While Soviet culture is being rejected by great numbers of Armenians today, it goes on living within the church. Many Armenians have turned to religion as a way of sorting out the decadence of Soviet culture, seeking firm ground upon which to stand and live with hope. They think that religion is the basis for any moral reformation of society. Sadly, the Armenian Church lingers far behind the rest of the society in refuting a corrupt Soviet culture.

Although it is unlikely in the short term that any new Armenian Church will emerge out of the old one, several comments made by Vazken I in a September 5, 1990, television address provide the opportunity to speculate about another scenario for the Armenian Church. The

patriarch congratulated the newly elected non-communist Armenian Parliament for its declaration of an independent Armenia:

This is the time for our people, both in our fatherland and in the diaspora, to emerge with a new spirit, abandoning the old molds of thinking and working, and following the words of the . . . Apostle: "You must remove the old yeast of sin so that you will be entirely pure" [I Cor. 5:7].

His remarks suggest a new model of a national church that would welcome vital, autonomous, secular institutions of government and culture as lifting from its shoulders the burden of being the sole symbol of national unity. With this new model, the Armenian Church would realize that its former real or imagined responsibilities for preserving the memory of the nation's rich past need no longer be its sole or even its primary concern. I recall a conversation with a young priest at Etchmiadzin who said to me: "The church will be much healthier and of true service to the gospel of Jesus Christ when one head is removed from the Patriarchal Eagle." He was referring to the two heads of the symbol of the Patriarchate representing the church's spiritual leadership of the nation and its role as custodian of the nation's temporal life and culture.

While this priest was committed to ministering to the immediate physical as well as spiritual needs of the people, he knew all too well the history of the national church. Under the millet or community system, the Ottomans had placed in the hands of the religious leadership the responsibility of overseeing and administering the internal lives of their religious-ethnic communities. What came of necessity grew into habit. Armenian hierarchs conceived of themselves as princes not only of the church but of the nation. As the Russian Orthodox theologian and historian John Meyendorff has pointed out, in the 19th century the reversal in the scale of values within what had already for some time become Orthodox national cultures was completed. "The 'nation' and its interests began to be considered as ends in themselves," and the churches internalized these nationalist aspirations in such a way that those aspirations became the

primary goals of the churches as well. In effect, "the Orthodox churches accepted *de facto* control by secular national interests." The temptations to blur the discontinuities between Soviet atheist culture and Christian faith only compounded this secularization of the faith.

I suggested to the young priest that the church itself is in a diaspora among its own people. To my surprise, he welcomed and heartily embraced that description. (I had not expected such a metaphor to be understood in Armenia, as it is not yet intelligible to most Armenians in the diaspora.) In order to understand the church in Armenia as in a diaspora, one must realize, in the face of a massive myth depicting even present-day Armenia as a Christian nation, that Armenian Christendom no longer exists. One must also understand the mission of the church as biblical and not nationalistic.

When I asked the wife of the priest of an historic church in the city of Etchmiadzin whether she thought Armenia was a Christian nation, she hesitated and then said, "Yes." I asked in what way that was so. "Armenians are hospitable," she said. While this was an answer worth exploring—hospitality is a powerful theme in biblical faith—it is not adequate. She knew it was not plausible either and said so later. In fact, it became clear that she held what can only be described as an apocalyptic view of the present times. She identified the Soviet empire as the harlot in Revelation 18, "drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus Christ." In her view only a remnant of the true faith remained. *Glasnost* and *perestroika* were "a good provision" to gather the faithful before the Second Coming. Yet the myth of an Armenian Christendom haunted her and remained a powerful part of her own symbolic construction of social and religious reality.

During my visit to Armenia, the complex relationship between faith and peoplehood was repeatedly brought home to me. Kevork and Anahid are a couple who lost their 12-year-old son and nearly lost their daughter in the earthquake. On the night I spent with them, I noticed that several feet from the foot of their bed was a small household "altar." Hung on the wall from top to bottom was a picture of their son, photographs

of family and friends in which the son was present, a crucifix, and the flag of the short-lived independent Armenian Republic of 1918-1920 (it has since become the flag of the new Armenian Republic). On a table against the wall were placed a votive candle, belongings of the son pulled out from the rubble, and a miniature volume of the Gospel of Mark.

Earlier, Kevork had made known to me his own personal struggle with faith and doubt. We had climbed a hill in Yerevan to a memorial to the 1.5 million martyrs and victims of the Turkish genocide perpetrated against the Armenians. Kevork told me that he had virtually exhausted himself in an argument with God. The earthquake, he believes—as do many Armenians—was set off deliberately by the Russians with an underground nuclear explosion to punish the Armenians for their defiance of Soviet authority. Anahid had had a recurring dream of God in the clouds and horses ascending into those clouds, where God's face was hidden. From out of the clouds God spoke: "I did not bring this catastrophe upon you." Even so, Kevork refused to exonerate God from responsibility for the earthquake. God was yet to blame, he exclaimed, "for he did not prevent the hand of men from doing such a thing to the Armenian people." I asked Kevork whether he was speaking of the earthquake or the genocide. "Both!" he answered.

Kevork's argument with God is on behalf not only of himself and his personal loss but of the victim nation—once victim of genocide, recently victim of a devastating earthquake. If faith is to be forged out of such tragedy, faith must illumine not only meaning for personal suffering, but for an entire nation's experience of affliction. (In October 1990, Kevork and Anahid's ten-year-old daughter Lillit visited the U.S. for a second time to receive corrective surgery for a head injury suffered during the earthquake. In accordance with the wishes and instructions of her parents, Lillit was baptized.)

Kevork was not the only Armenian I met who embodied such a union of faith and peoplehood. Meline and Dikran are two young professionals who live in one of the major cities in Armenia. She is a

professor of philology and ancient Greek and he is a professor of architecture. They describe themselves as Christian democrats and teach their children at home. They say they are for the restoration of Christianity. Their views came the closest to those I heard from Russian religious dissidents in Moscow. I asked Meline and Dikran what they thought of Vasken I and Etchmiadzin.

Dikran was emphatic. He wanted the church to join the political struggle for democracy and to oppose communism outright. I asked him if this was not a dangerous confusion of religion and politics, church and state. Was it not an invitation for the church to subordinate its primary mission of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to political and nationalistic purposes? He asked me, "What do you think the relationship of church and state should be?" I suggested that one problem with the Armenian Church in the past, whether under Ottoman or Soviet rule, was that it was too closely aligned with the state and wanted to assume the leadership of the nation. "Is it wrong for there to be an English Church?" Dikran countered. "No," I answered, but I also indicated that I think it is a mistake for any church to accept the status of an established church—in this case, a model based on the Constantinian-Theodosian union of church and state. With startling alacrity, Meline agreed that the church had been compromised over the centuries by the various transmutations of the Constantinian-Theodosian model. Dikran was less willing to follow the logic. He insisted that the role of the church is "to build the nation."

This couple's disagreement is a microcosm of the tremendous struggle among believers in Armenia over how to relate faith, church and nationalism. Many secular nationalists are quite content with an Armenian Church stuck in a medieval vision of Christendom, so long as the church does not challenge their own agendas. Under these conditions it is perfectly permissible and even desirable for the church to continue making vague pronouncements exhorting the nation to be proud of its past and hopeful about its future. In addition, a large number of believers hold to a narrow pietism and naive traditionalism which

leave them incapable of envisioning a church other than the existing one. But even Dikran wanted an activist church that would risk its comfort in order to move the nation toward real democracy—an entirely different matter.

While Catholicos Vazken's metaphor of the leaven and his call for the abandonment of old molds and for overcoming the spirit of "narrow nationalism" may mark the beginning of a new mind and mission for the Armenian Church, I remain deeply skeptical. Much, in fact, may depend initially not upon the disposition of Vazken I or the hierarchy but upon whether Christian Armenians in the diaspora offer their support to the faithful in Armenia through educational materials and resources for mission and evangelization. Yet diaspora Armenians must also report honestly and self-critically to their kin on the true nature of their own often-envied religious experience within free societies.

Perhaps Armenian-Americans will simultaneously find the will to commence the crucial business of sorting out what it means to be a Christian and a church in a nation that, although permitting religious freedom, is one in which religious bodies suffer profound spiritual enervation, the deconstructive impact of denominationalism and a secular hegemony which wears pluralism like a reversible vest.

I hope that the Armenian Church in America and in the rest of the diaspora may itself be regenerated and reformed under the influence of the religious awakening in Armenia. The various admixtures of faith and nationalism in the minds and hearts of Armenians need to be taken into account, but the awakening in Armenia itself is quite real. That lively and experiential faith reveals just how thin and pale much of diaspora Armenian Christianity is. Amid this religious ferment, Armenian national identity could well undergo some healthy transformations. Finally, there is reason to hope that the Armenian Church abroad and in Armenia will learn anew what it means to be free and faithful in Christ. Only then will it cease being the handmaid of nationalism and secular authority and instead be the spiritual leaven that raises and purifies the character of its people.

UPDATE ON ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCHES IN ARMENIA AND GEORGIA

The following update on the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Armenia and Georgia is culled from recent letters received by the AMAA and from the reports of Rev. Bernard Guekguezian and Rev. Movses B. Janbazian who were part of the latest AMAA delegation to visit Armenia.

The Armenian Evangelical Baptist Church in Yerevan is growing. Worship service attendance has risen to 650. The church has an active and growing youth group. Rev. Yuri Avanesian and the lay leaders of the church are doing their utmost to reach out to the members of the congregation and to engage in evangelism activities. They are overburdened and overworked, and they need our encouragement and support.

The church in Gumairi (Leninakan) has now more than 100 members. The services are led by Brother Rupig Pehlivanian. The new church building, a gift from the AMAA and the Armenian Evangelical Churches of France, meets the current needs of the congregation. However, it will soon need expansion to accommodate the growing congregation. The church urgently needs a full-time pastor.

The growing congregations in Girovagan and Stepanavan still meet in



Rev. Bernard Guekguezian, second from right, with the pastors of the Evangelical Church in Tbilisi, Georgia. The newly ordained Rev. Levon Khachadourian is the first from right.

the private homes of believers. They urgently need church buildings. Laymen lead the worship services, and Rev. Avanesian and brother Hagop Torosian provide guidance and encouragement. The Girovagan group meets in the home of Sister Arev Hairapetian on Marx Street. The Stepanavan fellowship is led by Brother Igor Minassian and meets at the home of the Ghougasians on Roustavel Street.

The Armenian Evangelical Church of Tbilisi, Georgia, now has 200 members and is growing steadily. Rev. Souren Harutunian continues to provide capable leadership. On September 20, 1990, the Rev. Levon Khachadourian of Tbilisi was ordained for Gospel Ministry. He is 57 years of age, and serves as Rev. Harutunian's assistant.

The church in Sokhoum, Georgia, continues to meet on Sundays at 2:00



Participants in a ladies' prayer meeting in Stepanavan

p.m. in the sanctuary of the local Russian Evangelical Church. Brother Mihran L. Torosian is the pastor. The congregation feels isolated and looks forward to having frequent opportunities for fellowship with other Armenian Evangelical churches.

The van donated to the Tbilisi Church is being put to good use. The Church has

planted three growing fellowships: one in Akhaltzikhe, which meets at the local Georgian Evangelical Church; another one in Kampardo in the Akhalkalak area, which meets in the house of brother Valer Zakarian; and a third one in Dzalga, where the fellowship meets in private homes. The pastors of the Tbilisi Church visit these newly-planted fellowships

regularly, providing guidance and encouragement.

The Armenian Evangelical Churches of Armenia and Georgia are going through an exciting period of deepening faith and expanding ministries. Their revival prompts joy and thanksgiving, and their needs call for continued support of their witness.

THE ARMENIAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN CHICAGO

Recently the AMAA received a letter from the Armenian Congregational Church of Chicago, IL (ACCC), which reflects on the blessings of that small but lively congregation that has been faithfully carrying on a most effective church and mission ministry for the past 75 years. The letter, signed by Mrs. Mary York, Chairman of Joint Boards, and Mrs. Juliette Vartanian, Chairman of the Trustees of ACCC, reads in part:

"It is almost a year since we acquired the property adjacent to our church building. In retrospect we realize that it was a tremendous undertaking for our church, a leap of faith and a giant step forward in the last 75 years of the history of our church. Despite its meager financial revenues, the Church Board embarked on some minor renovations and necessary repair work to make the building and its parking lot more usable.

The combined parking lot can now accommodate over 35 cars (against 10 that our single church property held) thus greatly promoting church attendance.

"We thank God for filling our hearts with love, faith and hope for the Church of Jesus Christ, thus enabling us to do what we have done so far. We also thank our friends in the AMAA for the great support we received from them at a time when we needed it most.

"It is also worth mentioning our small congregation which made a tremendous sacrifice by raising about \$50,000, which was far above our expectation. Our hopes are high for the future of this church, for we see how hungry our people are for the living word of Jesus Christ. We can and shall do greater things for him who called us to be his stewards.

"Despite our apprehensions in regard to our ever-increasing budget, which has

doubled during the last decade, as a small church, we have learned, in the words of the Apostle Paul, 'to be satisfied with what I (we) have. . . ' Phil. 4:12. This is one of the reasons why our church has never asked for help from outside for its operating expenses. On the other hand, we can state proudly and without exaggeration that our church has been a great contributor to the AMAA's world mission. Last year we raised over \$12,000 for the Orphan Fund. Last month we were on the local Armenian Radio Hour to appeal to the Armenian community in Chicago to raise funds for the orphans. This time we were able to raise about \$4,000."

The pastor of the ACCC is Rev. Barkev Darakjian, whose 25th year in Christian Ministry and 15th year as the Pastor of the Chicago Church were celebrated with a Testimonial Dinner last year. Rev. Darakjian, a prolific writer and a widely



Baptism and worship in the Armenian Evangelical Church of Tbilisi, Georgia.



respected scholar, was a latecomer into academic life. Following his graduation from an elementary school, he had to make a living for the following 22 years. He was 33 when he received the call for Christian ministry and decided to continue his education. His hard work got him admitted to the Freshman class at Haigazian College in Beirut, Lebanon. From there he moved on to the American University of Beirut and the Near East School of Theology. He studied seven years to earn the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Divinity. He held important positions in the Middle East, such as Secretary-Director of the Christian Endeavor Union of Syria and Lebanon, editor of the *Badanegan Artzakank* and *Chanasser* magazines, youth conference leader, preacher at large, lecturer, teacher and writer. He was respected and loved by college boys and girls who dubbed him "Chief." Rev. Darakjian's fifteen years of ministry to the Chicago Armenian Congregational Church has been beneficial not only for that church but also for the Armenian community. His services are not limited



The newly acquired building of the Armenian Cong'l. Church of Chicago, IL.

to his own congregation, but are extended to any Armenian who happens to be in need to help and guidance. His spirit of cooperation with the Armenian churches and organizations in the area is a source of inspiration to many. He is an ardent advocate of Armenian unity.

In all his endeavors and throughout his ministry, Rev. Darakjian has enjoyed the unreserved support and the active encouragement of his wife, Armine; and his children, Dr. Ani, married to Dr. Nazareth Darakjian of Pasadena, CA, and Houry, married to Michael Vitale of Chicago, IL.

PENTECOST SUNDAY IS "AEWC DAY"

Through a circular letter dated March 7, 1991, the President of the Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC), the Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian, reminded Armenian Evangelical Churches worldwide that Pentecost Sunday, celebrated this year on May 19th, is designated as "AEWC Sunday."

Rev. Tootikian's circular read in part, "It is customary on AEWG day to make an appeal to our churches for various ministries of the Council. Last year the collection from AEWG Sunday was sent to the Relief Fund of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in war-torn Lebanon.

The annual AEWG Sunday offering this year has been designated for the ministry of the reconstruction of Armenian Evangelical churches in Armenia.

"In the past six decades many Armenian (including our own evangelical)

churches were shut down by the Communist regime. But today, because of the new policy of religious tolerance in the Soviet Union, in general, and with a new non-Communist administration at the helm of the Republic of Armenia, new doors are being opened and new opportunities have arisen. A period of religious revival has dawned, and reconstruction has begun. Encouraged by this unprecedented phenomena, the Armenian Evangelical World Council will hold its Fourth Biennial Meeting in Armenia during August 6-11, 1991, and will endeavor to encourage the ministry of our churches in Armenia.

We urge that our churches be generous in their support of this AEWG ministry, and not only send the Pentecost—AEWC Sunday's gifts but possibly augment them from their churches' missions fund."

Contributions may be sent to:
Armenian Evangelical World Council
c/o Mr. George Philibosian, Treasurer
245 E. Palisade Avenue
Englewood, NJ 07631

The Armenian Evangelical World Council is a representative body of three Armenian Evangelical Unions (Armenian Evangelical Union of North America; Armenian Evangelical Union of France; and the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches of the Near East), and two organizations (Armenian Missionary Association of America, Inc., and the Stephen Philibosian Foundation), bringing Armenian Evangelicals together in order to enhance their fellowship, to strengthen their commitment to the Kingdom of God, and to evaluate, plan, and act upon ways and means of making the Armenian Evangelical testimony more effective.

ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL YOUTH CONVENTION IN SOUTH AMERICA

This year the Armenian Evangelical Youth groups of South America held their convention in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on January 24-27. The Convention was called Komonia III and hosted by the Youth of the Armenian Evangelical Congregational Church of Buenos Aires. In addition to a large group from the host church, participants in the event included Youth Groups from the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Sao Paulo, Brasil, and Montevideo, Uruguay. The theme of the Convention was "Spiritual Revival", and the three-day program included worship services, Bible studies, lectures and fellowship hours. The participants at the Convention also had the opportunity to reflect on the benefits and challenges of their Armenian heritage. The following testimony by Alexandra Megherdichian, a member of the Sao Paulo group, summarizes in a nutshell the message the participants took home from the Convention: "We must unite in our Christian endeavors and take the



Some of the participants in the Youth Convention in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

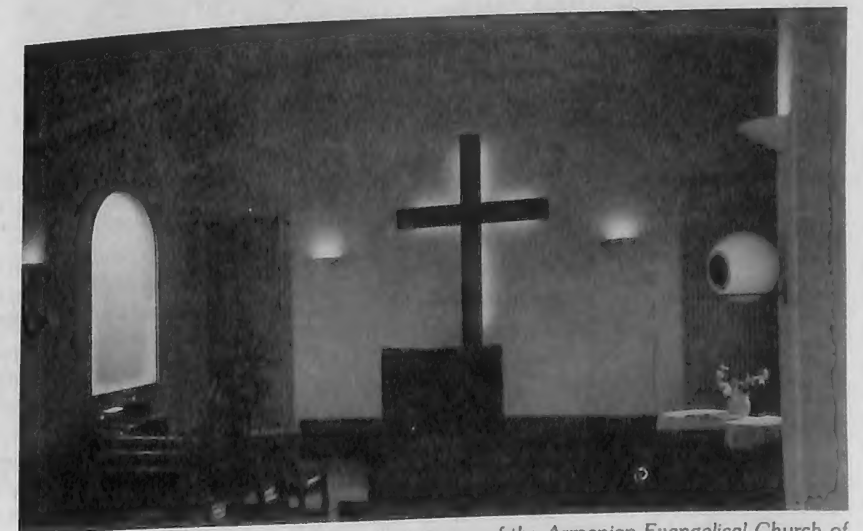
Gospel of Salvation of Jesus Christ to other youth so that they also may experience spiritual revival and serve our Lord and our country. We are Armenians, and this is not by accident. We

have a task to perform in the Armenian community. God has a purpose for each one of us, and we have to act according to that purpose, serving in the Armenian diaspora and even in Armenia, too."

RENOVATION OF ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN MARSEILLE

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) recently received a letter from the Treasurer of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Saint-Loup in Marseille, France, thanking the AMAA for its contribution to the renovation of the interior of the church. The letter goes on to say that there is now suitable space for the children's club, youth group activities, women's group meetings and church dinners. The church's next project, according to Mr. Serge Kurkdjian, the treasurer, will be renovation of the church's exterior.

The pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Saint-Loup is the Rev. Jaques Tchoghandjian, who also serves as the Minister of the Armenian Evangelical Congregation in Saint Antoin.



An interior view of the newly renovated sanctuary of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Saint-Loup (Marseille), France

"AMAA SUNDAY" OBSERVANCES

Armenian Evangelical Churches dedicate one Sunday each year as "AMAA Sunday" when the congregation is reminded of the work of the AMAA, which serves as the mission arm of the Armenian Evangelical Movement. On each occasion, the AMAA tries to have one or more representatives in attendance to bring the congregation up to date on the Association's activities. On "AMAA Sunday", churches take a special collection or dedicate the offering of the day for the mission of the AMAA.

The Armenian Cilicia Congregational Church in Pasadena, CA, had designated December 16, 1990, as "AMAA Sunday." Rev. Movses B. Janbazian, Executive Director of AMAA, was invited to deliver the sermons in Armenian and English. Following the service, lunch was served in the Church's Social Hall where Rev. Janbazian expounded on the AMAA's recent activities in Armenia and other countries.

The First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno, CA, observed "AMAA Sunday" on January 27, 1991. The Rev. Bernard Guekguezian, Pastor, and the Rev. Greg Harutunian, assistant pastor, led the service. The Executive Director of the AMAA, who was present, delivered the sermon and spoke about the current work of the AMAA. Mrs. Arpi Keledjian, the Treasurer of the church's Mission Committee, presented Rev. Janbazian with a \$4,800 check for the "Bibles For Armenia" project of the Association.

United Armenian Congregational Church of Hollywood, CA, held its "AMAA Sunday" on January 20, 1991. Rev. Berdj Djambazian, senior pastor, led the service, and Rev. Stephen Muncherian, associate pastor, delivered an inspiring sermon on Mission in the English language. The Armenian sermon was delivered by the Executive Director of the AMAA. Following the service, the mission committee of the church, chaired by Mr. Varoujan Baghdassarian, served its annual AMAA Luncheon, attended by more than 160 AMAA friends and sup-



The hard-working members of the Missions Committee of UACC with their Chairman, Mr. Varoujan Baghdassarian, first from right.

porters. The speaker at the Luncheon was Rev. Movses B. Janbazian, who presented an overview of the missionary outreach of the Association and stressed the importance of sharing in the work of the AMAA. Those present were treated a pleasant surprise when Mrs. Joyce Abdulian, chairperson of UACC's Armenian Earthquake Relief Committee, presented a \$42,000 check to the Executive Director of the AMAA for relief and rehabilitation work in Armenia.

On February 3, 1991, "AMAA Sunday" was observed at **The Armenian Evangelical Church of New York**. After Communion Services, led by the Rev. Dr. Leon Tavitian, the congregation was invited to a luncheon in the church's social hall. Mr. Nerses Aynilian, AMAA committee chairman, introduced Dr. H. Philip Hovnanian, former President of the AMAA; Mr. Edward Janjigian, the AMAA's current President; and Rev. Janbazian, Executive Director of the AMAA. Each spoke briefly about the AMAA's objectives and its current activities. Mr. Berge Kayaian presented the AMAA representatives with a \$1,000 check from the Deacons' Discretionary Fund and



Chairperson of the UACC's Armenian Earthquake relief Committee, Mrs. Joyce Abdulian, presenting a \$42,000 check to the Executive Director of AMAA.

Mrs. Adrina Kayaian presented a personal check for the Children's Milk Fund of the Association.

The Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church in Haverford, PA, held its "AMAA Sunday" on February 10, 1991. Rev. Janbazian delivered the ser-

mon and, following the service, lunch was served in the church's social hall. Albert Momjian, Esq., introduced Mr. Edward Janjigian, president of the AMAA, who reviewed briefly the history and ministry of the AMAA. Others who were invited to comment on their experiences with the AMAA included Mr. & Mrs. Charles DeMirjian, Mr. Millard Bekmezian, Mr. John Bogosian, Mr. Vahan Benglian, Mr. Nazar Daghlilian and Rev. Dr. Giragos Chopourian. In closing, the pastor of the church, Rev. Jirair Sogomian, thanked Mr. & Mrs. James Makoulian, Mr. & Mrs. John Devedjian and others who had contributed to the success of the event.

The Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ, marked "AMAA Sunday" with a special worship service on February 20. The service, led by the pastor of the church, the Rev. Dr. S. Nuyujukian, was followed by a mission luncheon in the church's Hekemian Fellowship Hall. The President and the Executive Director of the AMAA shared appropriate messages from the pulpit and during the luncheon.

The Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church (PACC) of Fresno, CA, held its "AMAA Sunday" on March 3. The well-attended service was led by the Rev. Roger Minassian, pastor, and Rev. Calvin Sagherian, assistant pastor. The President of the AMAA brought the greetings of the Association, and the Executive Director preached the sermons. One of the highlights of the service was the presentation of two special donations to the AMAA. Aaron Garabedian presented the Executive Director with a \$222 check, representing the Sunday School children's collection for the "Bibles for Armenia" project; and Rev. Minassian presented a \$4,500 check on behalf of PACC's Bibles For Armenia Committee and the Vergine Badeer/Margaret Krikorian circle of the Dorcas Guild. As an expression of its commitment to AMAA's mission to Armenia, PACC has embarked on a \$25,000 campaign to help make the Bible available to our people in Armenia. The worship service was followed by an AMAA-benefit luncheon organized and served by Dr. & Mrs. Harry Sadoian, Mr. & Mrs. Vahakn



On behalf of the children of the Pilgrim Church Sunday School, Aaron Garabedian presents a check to Rev. Janbazian for the "Bibles for Armenia" project of AMAA.



Mrs. Arpi Keledjian, Treasurer of the Mission Committee of the First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno, presenting her Committee's contribution to "Bibles for Armenia" Project.

Harutounian, Mr. Jake Kizirian, Mrs. Mary Boyajian, Mrs. Joy Torigian and other members of the PACC's mission committee.

The Calvary Armenian Congregational Church of San Francisco, CA, observed "AMAA Sunday" on February 10. In addition to a large number of church members, the service was also attended by AMAA supporters

from the Bay area. The service, led by the Rev. Nishan Bakalian, was highlighted by the participation of the President and Executive Director of the AMAA, who brought the greetings of the Association and delivered the sermons. The well-attended after-service luncheon, prepared by Mrs. Rosine Shamlian and served by the members of the church's Mission Committee, chaired by Mrs. Gladys Shegoian, offered an enjoyable occasion for fellowship and a meaningful time for reflection on the AMAA's current missionary endeavors. Participating in the program were the AMAA representatives; Mr. George Beylerian; and Dr. Zaven Adrouni, who expressed appreciation for the AMAA's assistance in the completion of the first phase of the church's building project and spoke about the church's plans to build a multi-purpose social hall.

This tradition of observing "AMAA Sunday" affords Armenian Evangelicals with an opportunity to celebrate their mission work, to renew their commitment to the purposes of the AMAA, and to promote the ministry of the Association with their combined efforts. More importantly, however, "AMAA Sunday" reinforces the sense of unity between church and mission that is a hallmark of the work of the AMAA.

AMAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEET IN LOS ANGELES

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) convened its most recent Board of Directors meeting, under the Chairmanship of its newly-elected president, Mr. Edward Janjigian, on March 2, 1991, at the Merdianian Armenian Evangelical School in Sherman Oaks, CA. Present were more than 25 Board members, including many from the East Coast. The attendees reviewed various reports and discussed a number of important agenda items, including the following:

Armenia Relief. This vital ministry continues to be a major focus of the AMAA. Two programs were reviewed in detail: Dr. Kenell Touryan, project manager, and Dr. Garen Galsdian, Deputy Rector of Yerevan Polytechnic Institute, reported on the progress of the AMAA's Renewable Energy Project. The work at Dzaghgatzor, where the wind turbines are being installed, is progressing satisfactorily and the unit should be ready for testing soon. Mrs. Elizabeth Agabian and Mrs. Michelle Simourian, co-Chairpersons, summarized the activities to date of the AMAA's Orphan Care Program. During the past 15 months more than \$700,000 worth of relief supplies were sent to Armenia and, with the help of Yerevan's Armenian Children's Fund, distributed to the intended recipients. The Orphan Care Committee is also working closely with the AMAA's Children's Milk Fund to provide children in Armenia with baby formula and powdered milk, both of which are in very short supply locally.

Home Mission Projects. Board members addressed a number of needs that exist in North America, especially among recent Armenian immigrants to the United States. Among the AMAA's Home Mission Projects that were reviewed at the meeting were:

1. The Merdianian Armenian Evangelical School in Sherman Oaks, CA. Due to the growing number of students, the school needs more room. The Board supported a Capital Fund Campaign to meet the growing needs of the school.

2. Armenian Evangelical Social Service Center. The AMAA will continue to



Participants in the AMAA Board of Directors meeting in Los Angeles



Members of the Friends of the AMAA—Peninsula Committee with their Chairperson, Mrs. Margo Gulesserian, first from left, and Treasurer, Mrs. Ronie Henesian, second from left.

support this center, which serves Armenian immigrants in the Hollywood area. Services of the Center include job development, English classes, referrals, counseling and acculturation programs. The Center, opened by the AMAA in 1976, is a popular source of help for immigrants.

3. "Hyaved Tzine". This AMAA-funded TV program is under the direction of Rev. Berdj Djmabazian, and preaches the gospel to Armenians throughout

California.

4. The Newly-Founded Armenian Evangelical Fellowships of Glendale and Orange County. These fellowships are helping meet the spiritual needs of the growing Armenian communities in those areas.

5. Churches. The AMAA helps strengthen the spiritual outreach of the Armenain Evangelical Church of Hollywood and the St. Nareg Church in Montebello, CA. The Board also approv-

ed the purchase of a church building in Pasadena, CA, valued at \$600,000, as the permanent home of the Armenian Cilicia Congregational Church.

Haigazian College—Beirut.

Haigazian College, which receives most of its funding from the AMAA, is rendering a vital service to the Armenian youth of Lebanon. It offers to every qualified Armenian young man or woman an opportunity to acquire a college education. Dr. Rendel Levonian, Chairman of the Haigazian College Board of Trustees, reported that there are currently 283 students in the College's East campus. He also informed the Board that Dr. John Markarian was recently appointed as Acting President in Residence—USA and that the College was the recipient of a \$50,000 grant from the Hewlett Foundation of San Francisco, CA.

Haigazian College-Yerevan Branch.

This project is pursued by the Haigazian College Board of Trustees, under the leadership of Dr. Rendel Levonian, and is enthusiastically supported by

the AMAA. What is proposed is a Graduate School of Management in Yerevan. Government officials in Armenia are excited about this project. A building has already been assigned and interior modifications are in progress.

After the meeting, the AMAA Board members were the dinner guests of the Merdianian School community. This gave Board members an opportunity to meet and have fellowship with the school's administrators, teachers, Board of Trustees, PTO officers and other invited guests.

Mr. Edward Janjigian, President of the AMAA, and Rev. Movses Janbazian, the Executive Director, remained in California for a two-week field trip to the Los Angeles, Fresno and San Francisco areas. This gave them an opportunity to meet and confer with pastors and leaders of affiliated West Coast churches; visit benefactors; attend the Board meeting of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA), which was held in Fresno on March 8 and 9; and take care of legal and business matters related to

major trust funds and donations. Rev. Janbazian attended an AMAA-benefit dinner organized by the Peninsula Friends of the AMAA and held at the home of Christopher and Nora Der-Manuelian of Santa Clara, CA. The AMAA leaders also participated in "AMAA Sunday" observances at the Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church of Fresno and the Calvary Armenian Congregational Church of San Francisco, delivering sermons at church services and speaking at AMAA-benefit luncheons organized by local church mission committees and AMAA chapters.

The field trip reaffirmed the high regard in which the AMAA is held among both evangelical and non-evangelical Armenians. Everywhere, people spoke appreciatively of the AMAA's work and expressed a willingness to continue their support of the Association's work. The field trip, although not intended as a fund-raising effort, nevertheless resulted in donations and pledges in excess of \$150,000.

ARMENIAN ORPHANS THANK AMAA

"Christmas was happier for the orphans in Leninakan when they received the Christmas packages sent by the Orphan Care Committee of the Armenian Missionary Association of America," says the director of the Aesthetic Center of Gumayri (Leninakan). Susanna Mkrtchian, the director, writes further: "This year we celebrated Christmas for the first time since the earthquake. Our children have not had a happy celebration for two years. Your gifts were distributed to the orphans and to the families who are taking care of them".

These gifts were made possible through the support of members and friends of AMAA at Christmas time, when an appeal was made by the Orphan Care Committee in the form of a "Phantom of the Opera" party fund-raiser. The response was not only encouraging but overwhelming. This was a clear indication that people still care, and they have not forgotten the orphans in Armenia. The Committee is indeed grateful to all the supporters.

Immediate plans for assistance to the orphans include the shipment of over two thousand pairs of shoes with a retail value



Co-Chairpersons of the AMAA's Orphan Care Committee, Mrs. Michele Simourian (right) and Mrs. Elizabeth Agabian (center) and the Chicago area representative of the Committee, Mrs. Juliette Vartanian.

of \$55,000, needed so desperately; protein food as emergency nourishment, with a retail value of \$70,000; vitamins, with a retail value of \$8,000; and sewing machines and fabrics for vocational training, with a retail value of \$12,000.

The long-range plans of the AMAA's Orphan Care Committee include:

1. A vocational training program to teach sewing, Armenian needle work, rug weaving, knitting, and embroidery. Thousands of yards of fabric were donated by the owner of the International Silk and Woolen Co. for this purpose.
2. English language instruction.
3. Extended Friday afternoon extracur-

ricular programs with audio-visual materials and children's story books.

4. A summer camping program, with young counselors from Armenia and church groups in the United States.

Since its inception two years ago, the Orphan Care Committee of the AMAA has sent over 12,000 packages to the Children's Fund in Yerevan, the Aesthetic Center in Leninakan, and centers in Spitak and the surrounding regions, thanks to the generous support of friends of the AMAA. The director of the Aesthetic Center writes: "More than the material support we are grateful to all our friends of the AMAA who still think of us and care for us thousands of miles away. This in itself gives us the courage to go on with our work, making the lives of the orphans a little happier and preparing them for a better future."

The Orphan Care Committee is headed by co-chairpersons Elizabeth Agbabian on the West Coast and Michele Simourian on the East Coast. East Coast members of the committee are: Mary Jane Hekemian, Lucy Janjigian, Hilda Melkonian, Elida Telfeyan, Diana Garoyan-Monaco and Juliette Vartanian. West Coast members are: Joyce Abdulian, Carlotta Bedrosian, Hermine Janoyan, Grace Kurkjian, Mary Najarian, Joyce Stein and Savey Tufenkian.

Contributions to the Orphan Care Project of AMAA are tax deductible and may be sent to AMAA, 140 Forest Ave., Paramus, NJ 07652.

AMAA JAMESON ESSAY CONTEST OPEN

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) has announced the opening of its annual James G. Jameson Essay Contest. Topics should touch upon some aspect of Armenian heritage such as religion, literature, language, history, culture, geography, economy or history.

Awards will be made in two categories: High School contestants and College/University contestants. Entries will be accepted until May 31, 1991.

Any Armenian or part-Armenian high school or college/university

student is eligible. Only unpublished entries will be accepted. The winner in each category will be awarded \$200, provided from the income of a special Essay Contest Fund established by Mr. and Mrs. James G. Jameson of Brookline, MA.

The essays should be written in English and have a length of 1,000 to 2,000 words. A contestant is allowed no more than one entry per year, and no more than one member of a family may receive an award in a five-year period. If no submitted essay is considered suf-

ficiently meritorious, no award will be granted.

A panel of three judges, chaired by Mr. George Maranjian, chairman of the Publications Committee of the AMAA, will evaluate contest entries.

Entries and/or inquiries should be directed to:

James G. Jameson Essay Contest
Armenian Missionary Association
of America, Inc.
140 Forest Avenue
Paramus, NJ 07652

IN GRATITUDE FOR A GRANDCHILD



Baby Susan Elein Garabedian

Recently, Mr. & Mrs. Berge Kayaian of Flushing, NY, celebrated a happy event in their family in a most gracious manner. In gratitude to God for the gift of a grandchild, Susan Elaine, born on October 2, 1990, to their daughter and her husband, Elizabeth and Patrick Garabedian, Mr. and Mrs. Kayaian made a generous gift to the AMAA for the Armenian Children's Milk Fund. Through this project, the AMAA endeavors to provide baby formula and powdered milk to infants and children in Gumairi (Leninakan) and the surrounding villages in Armenia, where there is a critical shortage of these items. In presenting their thoughtful gift,

Mrs. Kayaian stated, "We praise God for His gift of a granddaughter to us, and are grateful that in this country of abundance, she has all the baby formula she needs. Our blessings makes us think of the needs of those children in Armenia who suffer because of lack of proper nourishment. We pray that other new parents and grandparents in the United States will consider celebrating the birth of their children or grandchildren by contributing to the AMAA's Milk Fund for Armenia."

A beautiful gesture of Christian gratitude. . . and a noble wish, to which we add our "Amen."



ARMENIANS FROM IRAQI BORDER VILLAGES FIND SHELTER IN ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH

According to the February 2, 1991, issue of the Turkish newspaper "Gunesh", Armenians from the Iraqi border village of Silop, fearing an eruption of chemical warfare, have sought refuge in Istanbul, Turkey. The Armenians are said to have abandoned their village immediately after the outbreak of fighting in the Persian Gulf. They have been given shelter in the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedig Pasha in Istanbul. The refugees are mostly textile workers but are ready to do any type of work to support themselves.

The director of the German Hilfsbund missionary organization visited the displaced families on March 23 to learn about their needs. The AMAA and the Hilfsbund organization are seeking ways to help the displaced families cope with their housing and other basic needs.

SET MOMJIAN



Groom and bride—The Rev. Samuel and Houry Agulian.

President Bush recently announced the reappointment of Set Momjian to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council for a term of five years. The council is overseeing the construction of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

THE ARMENIAN CILICIA CONG'L CHURCH

The Armenian Cilicia Congregational Church of Pasadena, CA, is in the process of acquiring a church building of its own. The congregation, consisting of about 100 families, has raised about \$300,000 and has asked for financial assistance from the AMAA. On December 15, 1990, the pastor of the church, Rev. Samuel Agulian, married Houry Khachigian in Pasadena. We wish them the Lord's blessing in their new life and ministry.



Rev. Rene Leonian

Paris, president of the "Hope for Armenia" committee, and an active participant of the Armenian Evangelical Union of France and the Armenian Evangelical World Council.

REV. HOVHANNES KARJIAN



Rev. Hovhannes N. Karjian

REV. RENE LEONIAN

The Rev. Rene Leonian was elected president of the Association of Protestant Evangelical Churches in French-Speaking Countries. This Association represents 12 Protestant Evangelical organizations based in France, Switzerland and Belgium with a constituency of more than 400 churches.

The purpose of this Association is to coordinate the activities of the member churches in such areas as programs for children and young people, meetings for pastors, etc.

The election of Rev. Leonian took place at Paris on November 25, 1990, unanimously by acclamation on the part of the delegates. Rev. Leonian is pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church in

Rev. Hovhannes N. Karjian, who served for two years as interim pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Australia, has returned to Lebanon to serve as President of Near East School of Theology. Rev. Dr. Herald Hassessian of Pasadena, CA, with AMAA support, has gone to Australia to take Rev. Karjian's place as interim minister.

IN MEMORIAM: ELIZABETH MERDINIAN 1901-1990

Elizabeth Merdinian of Los Angeles, CA, a life-long AMAA member and the benefactress of the Charlotte and Elise Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School of Sherman Oaks, CA, passed away on December 24, 1990, at the golden age of 90.

A memorial service was held on January 11th at the United Armenian Congregational Church (UACC) of Hollywood, CA. The interment was in the Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, CA, followed by a memorial meal at the Avazian Hall of UACC. Testimonial Messages and Eulogies were offered by Ms. Elida N. Telfeyan, Vice President of AMAA; Rev. Berdj Djambazian, pastor of UACC; Mr. Harold DeMirjian, Vice President of AMAA and Trustee of Miss Merdinian; Rev. Karl Avakian, Minister to AEUNA; Arch. Datev Sarkissian, Prelate of the Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church-Western United States; Father Mesrob Topalian, Pastor of the Armenian Catholic Church of Los Angeles; Mr. Zaven Khanjian, Chairman of the Board of Armenian Evangelical Schools of California, Inc.; Mr. Hrant Simonian, a close friend of Miss Merdinian; Mrs. Hermine Mahserejian, Principal of Merdinian School; and Yervant Shaghmirian, President of the Student Council of Merdinian School. Other participants in the



AMAA Benefactress Elizabeth Merdinian

memorial service included: Rev. Apraham Chaparian; Rev. Samuel Agulian; Mr. Hrant Agabian, the conductor of the UACC choir; Mrs. Christine Merjanian, organist; Rev. Daniel Albarian; Rev. Dr. Herald Hassessian; and Rev. Stephen Muncherian.

A large number of friends and admirers of Miss Merdinian, as well as represen-

tatives of Armenian organizations and churches in California, attended the Service, which offered an occasion for solemn celebration of her life.

The following testimonial messages represent a loving tribute to Miss Merdinian, who, with her unusual generosity and signal benefactions has touched the lives of so many people.

ELIZABETH MERDINIAN A Biographical Sketch

Elise Merdinian was born in Istanbul, Turkey, on May 15, 1901. She emigrated to the United States in 1917 and attended high school in Massachusetts. Soon after, her mother and sister joined her and established residency in New York. After losing their beloved mother in the early 1950's, the Merdinian sisters moved to California and settled in Los Angeles.

Through hard work, perseverance and wise management of personal assets, the Merdinian sisters accumulated substantial wealth.

In 1982, Elise fulfilled a dream and a commitment to God and her people by establishing the Charlotte and Elise Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School, to which she donated all of her wealth, which exceeded two

million dollars.

In 1988, Elise was the recipient of most befitting holy encyclicals from the Catholicosate of all Armenians of Holy "Etchmiadzin" and the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia. In addition, she received special citations from the Governor of California, the President of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, and the Moderator of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America.

Elise will be missed by the entire Armenian Evangelical community, and particularly by the children of the Merdinian School, its faculty, administration, and board of directors as well as by her many personal friends and relatives.

REMEMBRANCES AND TESTIMONIES

FROM EDWARD JANJIGIAN, PRESIDENT OF THE AMAA

The AMAA Board of Directors, officers and staff are deeply saddened by the death of our benefactress, Elise Merdinian. Elise Merdinian was a benefactor of the AMAA for many years. Her commitment to the establishment of a school was an evolutionary process. One of her favorite AMAA projects was the child sponsorship program. She sponsored 8 to 10 children annually. She was very attached to them. In her heart she determined that all her accumulated wealth would be left for charitable causes. She had many thoughts in her mind in those days—such as a Christian education center, a church sanctuary, a youth center. The evolution of her dream was guided by AMAA leadership, under which she accepted the wisdom of limiting her contributions to one major project. As a result she became the founder of the first Armenian Evangelical day school in the United States, *The Charlotte and Elise Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School* in Sherman Oaks, California. As an astute business lady she was concerned as to the continuity of her dream school and determined that AMAA should be the institution to carry on as trustee of the school.

Elise was fiercely independent, but with the grace to listen to advice and singleminded of purpose without offending advisers. She was personally committed to Jesus Christ. Thus, with a warm spot in her heart for children, she masterfully managed to bring to fruition the dream closest to her heart—to become mother to the children that grace the halls of the Armenian Evangelical Day School. We have lost a caring, Armenian Evangelical Day School. We have lost a caring, mission-minded, able and faithful steward, who by her total-sacrificial donations, became a most valued and outstanding benefactress whose actions and memory are unforgettable. The AMAA is pledged to fulfill her trusteeship arrangements faithfully.

The Lord Bless her Memory and give her peace.

FROM THE REV. DR. G.H. CHOPOURIAN, HONORARY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF AMAA

Elise Merdinian and the United States of America were a perfect match.

Close to twenty years of a working relationship with her as Executive Director of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, Inc. prompts me to make the above extraordinary statement.

All the elements of the American Spirit, not to say culture, which make for success were embodied in her. She believed America to be a country of opportunity and determined to exploit all openings in line with her inclinations, desires, ambitions and purposes.

America during most of her life in the States believed in the Protestant work ethic. As a Protestant herself, she brought that Calvinistic work ethic with her from Turkey and in the free atmosphere of America she practiced it thoroughly. She was never afraid of doing menial work, despite her knowledge

that there were those who scoffed at her style. She was not concerned about dress, working a parking lot, living modestly, being economical. She stood firmly on principle, saying, "It is nobody's business!" Indeed, it is not.

Elise was a fiercely independent person, not always apparent to her friends with whom she was extremely cordial and polite. She was so in every area—her faith, goals and plans—again not obvious to the uninitiated.

American liberty and independence were a cherished concepts for her, whereby she was not threatened by discrimination or male chauvinism. She worked in a man's world, dealing in real estate, rentals, repairs and so forth, as well as in the investment world.

What I have stated about this person of depth with no college education may surprise most. She was no ordinary individual. Those of us who worked with and guided her know better. All her charitable plans were done in a very deliberate way because she knew what she wanted. We may have made the mistake of promoting her charities when we should have seen this humble lady as a fortress of strength. I know!

FROM ELIDA N. TELFEYAN, VICE PRESIDENT OF AMAA

As a relative—married to a relative—a second cousin—I called her 98-year-old uncle, Vahan Simidian, who lives in Florida. With amazing memory he recounted the difficulties that the Merdinian family had undergone. Elise's father died when she was just a year old. How difficult it must have been for the mother of two small daughters to carry on. They lived in Ankara in the early days and were helped by relatives, both Tabibian and Simidian. In 1911 the small family went to Istanbul and lived with a Simidian uncle. When she came to the United States she lived with her mother's sister's family, Dr. & Mrs. Shahinian. They eventually moved to New York and lived in Jackson Heights. It was there that I first met her. As a young girl my mother would take me along when she went to visit Mrs. (Digin) Merdinian. I was impressed at a young age at how the two sisters worked hard to support themselves and their mother. Later, I married her cousin, Sarkis Telfeyan, and so we became cousins in fact.

The diligence and caring of both Charlotte and Elise for their mother and their closeness to all members of the extended family is a celebration of a truly Christian life. Perhaps, a celebration of a truly Armenian Christian life.

All of her relatives will miss Elise—joyful, loving and caring. A marvelous example for all of us. A life given fully to Christ.

FROM JOYCE STEIN, A FRIEND OF MISS MERDINIAN

I was a little girl when I first met Elise Merdinian. She was a very close friend of the family; in fact, on one occasion when my parents took an extended trip, Elise was called to take charge of my sister and me for a number of weeks! After that time, I fondly termed Elise my "baby-sitter".

Although she is gone, her magnanimity will inspire us to share in some measure what she gave—everything! All of us who knew her were blessed by her friendship and we shall never forget her great generosity.

In an afternoon I spent with Miss Elise Merdinian, she said repeatedly, "All I have I owe to my mother's prayers and good heart. She was never interested in her wealth and position, always generous and giving." Elise had quite a role model in her mother.

She had reached out to persons all her life. She gave free room and board to students unable to pay rent, even giving them money to tide them over, never expecting repayment. The joy she received from giving to others seems to have been enough. She never regretted these acts of kindness, truly believing, "Cast your bread upon the waters and it shall be returned to you."

Հանգուցեալ էլիզ Մերտրինեանին հետ իմ մտերմութիւնը 25 տարիներու անցեալ մը ունի՝ իր վիպային եւ դիպուկ արումներով, ամենօրեայ ապրումներով: Օր, էլիզ կը սիրէր զիս՝ խենդի պէս: Պատահական սէր, որ երբեք չզաղորեցաւ ամենօրեայ ապրում ըլլալէ, մինչեւ իր մահը Դեկտեմբեր 24, 1990: Էլիզին հետ Արմինիւն Թէլէթայմին վրայ հարցազրոյցի նստած ենք՝ 1988-ին: «Էլիզ» կը հարցնեմ, «քեզի պէս գեղեցիկ հայ աղջիկ՝ ինչո՞ւ համուսնացար, եւ հայ օրինակելի ընտանիք, զաւակներ, մարդավարի կեանք, նիստ ու կայ ինչե՞ր, ինչե՞ր փախցուցիր»: «Ամա՛ն դուռն ալ» ըսաւ էլիզ, «Հայ ամուսինները խորոզ են խորոզ: Ամուսնանայինէ քանի մը զաւակներ պիտի ունենայի: Տես այսօր 298 զաւակներ ունիմ: Ամա՛ն անոնց սեւուրիկ աչքերը սիրեմ: Ինչպէս հարազատ կը փաթուի ինծի եւ կը յուզուիմ: Հայ ամուսին եթէ ունենայի պիտի թոյլ տա՞ր որ այս պուրիկ էլիզը անմահանար, գալրոց բանար, մատուռ յիշատակներ»:

Այնքան ժլատ՝ ինք իրեն հանգեղեալ եւ այնքան առատաձեռն իր ազգին ու համայնքին կարիքներուն՝ իսկապէս առեղծուածային պատկեր է: «Էլիզ, շաբաթը անգամ մը ծառայ բերենք, տունը թող մազրէ, չուկայ տանի քեզի, խալիները վաքիւմ ընէ, պատուհանները մաքրէ: Սպիրիշին երթանք, մազերը բերմանանք»:

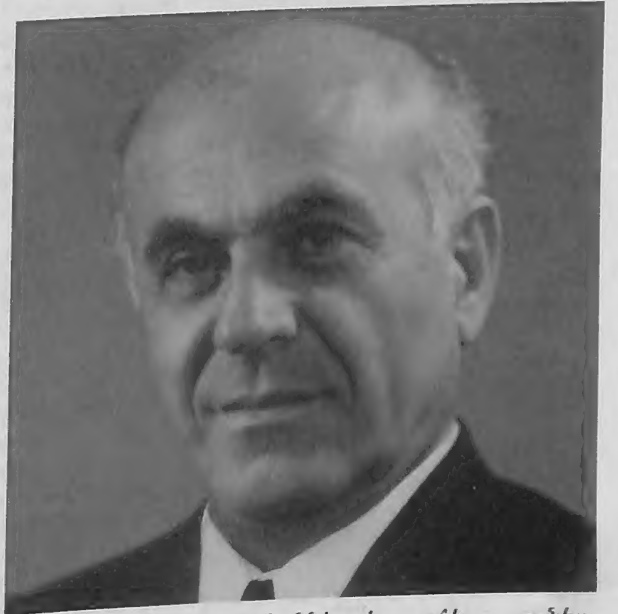
Հրաժեշտի մեր խօսքը կ'ըսենք Օր. Էլիզ
Մերտինեանին՝ որ մեզմէ կը բաժնուի մարմնապէս:
Հրաժեշտի խօսք ճանապարհորդի մը՝ որ կ'երթայ դէպի

Արդարներուն յիշատակը օրհնութեամբ պիտի ըլլայ,

Մեր Բարերարություններն յիշատակը թող յաւիտենապէս
օրհնութեամբ ըլլայ:

Վեր. Յովհաննէս Փ. Ահարոնեան

Չենք կրնար մոռնալ, ամէն դարձեալ և
հայեր, ծծկեր երեխաներ եւ մանուկներ, անմեղ տղաք
եւ աղջիկներ, կոյս աղջիկներ եւ երիտասարդներ,
դերատի կիներ եւ մայրեր, չափահաս մարդիկ եւ



«Չենք կրնար մոռնալ այն քիչերը, որոնք, իրենց տառապանքի եւ չարչարանքի սաստկութեան պատճառաւ, չկրցան իրենց հաւատքին բարի վկայութիւնը տալ եւ փորձութենէ տարուելով հաւատուրաց եղան: Բայց մանաւանդ անփնջելի կը մնայ յիշատակը այն բոլոր նահատակներուն որոնք "աղէկ սեպեցին Աստուծոյ ժողովուրդին հետ չարչարելի" ու "աւելի մեծ. . . հարստութիւն Քրիստոսի նախափորձը" եւ իրենց արիւնով ու մահուամբ կնքեցին բարի վկայութիւնը: Չենք կրնար մոռնալ Ատանայի Հայ Աւետարանական Միութեան Համաժողովին դացող եւ իրենց ճամբուն վրայ

Օսմանիայի մէջ եւ Ատանայի ջարդին նահատակուող Հայ Աւետարանական 11 հովիւներ, 12 քարոզիչներ ու 7 պատուիրակներ ու յետագային անոնց բախտակից՝ հարիւրաւոր հոգեւորականները ու հազարաւոր հաւատացեալները: Ձենք կրնար չյիշել, Տէր Զօրի արեւի ճառագայթներու տակ եւ իրենց դահիճներու արտօնութեամբ՝ Զէյթունցի ծերունի սարկաւազի եւ խումբ մը սովամահ եւ կիսամեռ հաւատացեալներու կատարած վերջին հաղորդութեան պաշտամունքը աւագի հատիկներով եւ կաթիլ մը ջուրով՝ հացի եւ զինիի բացակայութեան, միանալու ու մասնակցելու իրենց հաւատքի առաջնորդին՝ Գրիստոսի մահուան եւ յարութեան: Մեր ծայրը կը խառնենք սաղմոսներգուի աղաղակին եւ կ'ըսենք. "Ո՛վ Տէր, հեթանոսները քու ժառանգութեանդ մէջ մտան, քու սուրբ տաճարդ պղծեցին, քու ծառաներուդ դիերը երկինքի թռչուններուն կերակուր տուին, քու սուրբերուդ մարմինը՝ երկրի գազաններուն: Անոնց արիւնը ջուրի պէս թափեցին. . . մէկը չկար որ զանոնք թաղեր". կը պատկանինք ազգի մը որ եկեղեցական պատմութեան ընթացքին ուրիշ որեւէ ժողովուրդէ աւելի նահատակներ եւ մարտիրոսներ տուած է: Վա՛յ է մեզի եթէ մոռնանք մեզի ձգուած քրիստոնէական հաւատքը:

Ձենք կրնար մոռնալ. բայց ո՛չ ատելութեան եւ վրէժի զգացումով քանի որ "վրէժխնդրութիւնը իմս է, ես պիտի հատուցանեմ" կ'ըսէ Տէրը (Հովմ. ԺԲ. 19): Կ'ուզենք ներել, կ'ուզենք մոռնալ, բայց կարող չենք. ճշմարտութեան եւ արդարութեան պահանջը մեզ կը ստիպէ մեր աղաջանքը խառնելու Յայտնութեան գրքի Աստուծոյ խօսքին եւ անոր վկայութեան համար սպանուածներու մեծ աղաղակին եւ ըսելու, "Ո՛վ սուրբ ու ճշմարիտ Տէր, մինչեւ երբ չես դատեր ու մեր (նահատակներու) արիւնին վրէժը չես. . . պահանջը" (Յայտն. 2. :): Արդա՛ր է որ Հայ ազգի դահիճներու կողմէ հատուցում ըլլայ խոստովանութեան եւ զղջումի ոգիով: Արդա՛ր է որ վերադարձուին մեր պապենական հողերը, որոնց վրայ մեր ժողովուրդը բնակած է հազարամեակներով: Արդա՛ր է որ ճշմարտութիւնն ու իրաւունքը իր կապարեայ ծանրութեամբ ճնշէ ցեղասպան ազգի եւ աշխարհի թմրած խղճմտանքին վրայ, որպէսզի մոռացութեան չմատնուի ու չկրկնուի այն մեծ անարդարութիւնը որ Հայ ազգին բաժինը եղաւ՝ լոյս ցերեկով ու արար աշխարհի աչքին առջեւ:

Ապրիլեան յիշատակութիւնները մեզ կը փոխադրեն Մեծ Յղեռնի ահաւոր փուլումին, եւ առաքեալին հետ կ'ըսենք. "Ամէն կողմանէ վշտացած ենք բայց նեղը ինկած չենք. կարօտեալ ենք, բայց յուսահատած չենք. հալածուած ենք, բայց երեսէ ձգուած չենք. վար ձգուած ենք, բայց կորսուած չենք: Ամէն ատեն Յիսուսի մահը մեր մարմիններուն մէջ կը կրենք, որպէսզի Յիսուսի կեանքն ալ մեր մարմիններուն մէջ յայտնուի:" (Բ. Կորնթ. Դ. 8-10): Ուրեմն, կրկին սրբազան հեղինակին հետ կ'ըսենք. "Մենք ալ որ այսչափ վկաներուն բազմութիւնը մեր բոլորտիքը պատած ունինք, ամէն ծանրութիւն մեր վրայէն մէկդի ձգենք եւ մեզ դիւրաւ պաշարող մեղքը, ու համբերութիւնով վազենք մեր առջեւ դրուած ասպարէզի ընթացքը:" (Եբր. ԺԲ. 1): Յարուցեալ եւ վերանորոգեալ կեանքի տենջը ունինք:

Ասպարէզ մը ունինք մեր առջեւ, նոր կեանքի, նոր հաւատարմութեան եւ նոր վկայութեան: Մեր ոյժերը հաւաքելով կը լծուինք կենսունակ աշխատանքի, միանալով մայր Հայրենիքի մեր եղբայրներուն ու քոյրերուն, կերտելու նոր մշակոյթ մը ու ազգային կեանք մը, մեզի ժառանգ մնացած արմենական հաստատ ու ամուր հիմերու վրայ: Կը վերաշինենք մեր տուները, մեր կրթական հաստատութիւնները. կը սատարենք մեր պատկանած ընկերութիւններու ու հայրենիքներու վերակառուցման եւ յառաջդիմութեան: Կը կերտենք նոր ազգային կառոյց մը, կը կերտենք նորը, հաստատ եւ պանծալի հիմերու վրայ: Կը վերաշինենք երկնային առաջնորդութեամբ մեր եկեղեցիներն ու կրթական օրրաններու հոգեւոր կառոյցը: Կը կերտենք հաւատքի Մարդը՝ Յիսուս Քրիստոսի կերպարանքով: Այ՛ո, պարտաւոր ենք կերտելու այն սրբազան եւ անզուգական ժառանգին վրայ, որ մեզի աւանդ մնացած է կնքուած մեր բիւր բիւրաւոր նահատակներու եւ մարտիրոսներու նուիրական արիւնովը: Կը կերտենք Աստուծոյ Թագաւորութեան գալստեան համար եւ Տէր Յիսուս Քրիստոսի անունով:

ՎԵՐ. ԵՈՒՀԱՆՆԱ ԹՕՐՕ (1910-1991)

Աղքատութեան մէջ հարուստ, տկարութեան մէջ կայտառ, ցանկուն մէջ անտրտուն, քննադատութեանց դէմ անկոն, մեղքին դէմ խրոխտ կեցուածքով անվեհեր Քրիստոսի մարտիկն էր Վեր. Եուհաննա Թօրօ: Մնած է Յունուար —, 1910, եւ ննջեց ի Տէր Յունուար 1, 1991, Փասատինա, Գալիֆորնիա:

Աստուածատուր տաղանդներն ու պարզեկները թէեւ անտաշ, զանոնք գործածեց լիովին Տէրոջ փառքին համար: Կոչումի եւ տեսիլքի տէր մշակ մըն էր Վերապատուելին:

Աստուած գինք ալ մարգարէներուն նման առօրեայ կեանքէն ու գործէն՝ կօշկակարի սեղանէն կանչելով հրաւիրած էր Աւետարանական բեմէն Աստուծոյ խօսքին խօսնակը ըլլալու իր հարազատ Ասորի ժողովուրդին: Այս դաշտին համար ալ կը ձեռնադրուի Մերձաւոր Արեւելքի Հայ Աւետարանական եկեղեցիներու Միութեան կողմէ:

Վերապատուելի Թօրօն գրիչի մարդ էր: Հակառակ իր ուսման խիստ սահմանափակ ըլլալուն, տասնեակներէ աւելի հոգեւոր նիւթերու շուրջ գիրքեր հրատարակեց: Իր հարիւրաւոր թերթիկները շատերուն հոգեւոր սնունդ եւ փրկութեան պատճառ դարձած են:

Վերապատուելին աղօթքի մարդ էր: Կը հաւատար աղօթքի զօրութեան եւ թէ աղօթքին կատարած հրաշքներուն՝ թէ՛ իր անձնական կեանքին մէջ եւ թէ՛ ալ իր աղօթքներուն արդիւնքին՝ ուրիշներուն կեանքին մէջ:

Վերապատուելի Թօրօն իբր տեսիլքի մարդ, տոկունութեան շիջով մը օժտուած էր:

Արդար է ըսել վերապատուելին համար ալ թէ ան՝ «Բարի պատերազմը պատերազմեցաւ, ընթացքը կատարեց, հաւատքը պահեց, կը մնայ իրեն ալ արդարութեան պսակը, զոր Տէրը, արդար Դատաւորը, պիտի հատուցանէ այն Օրը. . . »:

Թող անոր սերմանած հունտերը յետ իր մահուան տան առատ հունձ ի փառս Աստուծոյ, եւ յօգուտ համայնքին: Տէրը օրհնէ կը յիշատակը եւ իր անունն ու գործերը իբր աւանդ մնան զինք ճանչցնողներուն սրտերուն մէջ:

Վեր. Զեբբլու Ա. Կ. Հաստեան

OBITUARIES

The AMAA Board of Directors extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased through the medium of the AMAA NEWS.

Najarian, Amelia	Reading, PA	June 16, 1990
Darakjian, Anahid	Watertown, MA	June 20, 1990
Muncherian, Sonia	Los Angeles, CA	July 2, 1990
*Najarian, Florence	Fresno, CA	August 8, 1990
*Ahlijian, Beatrice		August 19, 1990
Minassian, Yerant	New York, NY	August 20, 1990
*Baharian, Assadour	Athense, Greece	August 22, 1990
Paboojian, Vivian	W. New York, NY	Sept. 19, 1990
*Hadjian, Yenovk	Hadmen, CT	Oct. 15, 1990
Ajemian, Bagdasar	Fresno, CA	Oct. 17, 1990
Azarian Victoria	Fresno, CA	Oct. 17, 1990
Barmakian, Shoushan	Montclair, NJ	Oct. 18, 1990
*Riedler, Walter	Tenafly, NJ	Oct. 23, 1990
Shamlian, Anny Aznive	Fresno, CA	Oct. 25, 1990
Sherman, Mary	Los Angeles, CA	Oct. 27, 1990
*Kupalian, Esther	W. Bloomfield, MI	Oct. 30, 1990
*Sarkisian, Leon	Miami Shore, FL	Nov. 1, 1990
*Berejikian, Jonathan	Flintridge, CA	Nov. 3, 1990
Topalian, Mary	Boston MA	Nov. 11, 1990
Apelian, Bedros	Torrance, CA	Nov. 17, 1990
Mosesian, Thelma	Newton, MA	Nov. 20, 1990
*Shipley, Alice	Chandler, AZ	Nov. 21, 1990
Sayranian, Zabel	Daly City, CA	Nov. 29, 1990
Bedian, Lydia	Fresno, CA	Nov. 30, 1990
*Nakashian, John	Hookset, NH	Dec. 1, 1990
Mgrditchian, Joseph	New York, NY	Dec. 6, 1990
*Benglian, Semon	Southfield, MI	Dec. 19, 1990
Guekguezian, Nevart	Fair Lawn, NJ	Dec. 20, 1990

*Merdinian, Elise	Los Angeles, CA	Dec. 24, 1990
*Deukmedjian, Nazeni	Hicksville, NY	Dec. 24, 1990
*Artinian, Haroutune	Flushing, NY	Dec. 26, 1990
*Hoplamagian, Beatrice	New Port Richey, FL	Dec. 26, 1990
*Toro, Rev. Yohanna	Pasadena, CA	Jan. 1, 1991
*Shahinian, Marion	Clifton, NJ	Jan. 1, 1991
Elia, Joe	Fresno, CA	Jan. 8, 1991
Leighton Dorothy	Medford, MA	Jan. 10, 1991
Mahakian, Hasmig	Malden, MA	Jan. 11, 1991
*Kevorkian, Zenas	Cranston, RI	Jan. 12, 1991
*Avedian, Aram		Jan. 17, 1991
*Boyajian, Mary Jean	Providence, RU	Jan. 23, 1991
Poochigian, Dorothy	Fresno, CA	Jan. 29, 1991
Rustigan, Rose	Newington, CA	Feb. 1, 1991
*Googoolian, Martha	Huntington Beach, CA	Feb. 5, 1991
*Shamlian, Puzant	San Francisco, CA	Feb. 6, 1991
*Kashishian, Enock	Parlier, CA	Feb. 7, 1991
*Tashjian, Adrienne	Leonia, NJ	Feb. 16, 1991
*Meghrigian, Christine	Los Angeles, CA	Feb. 26, 1991
*Hatounian, Gulhatir	Levittown, NJ	March 9, 1991
Boole, Helen	W. Newton, MA	March 10, 1991
*Terzian, Marie	N. Hollywood, CA	
Shirvanian, Vergine	Los Angeles, CA	
*Harrison, Araxy A.	Yeadon, PA	
Surabian, Haig	Fresno, CA	
*Bezjian, Hagop	Los Angeles, CA	
*Peliffian, Linney	Massena, NY	
*Aintablian, Abraham	E. Tawas, MI	
*Vart, Nooritza	Chaltenham, PA	
*Bedrosian, Simon	Teaneck, NJ	
*Ayanian, Christine	Detroit, MI	

***Chapanian, Rose**
Studio City, CA
***Aharonian, Mike**
***Cholakian, Elizabeth**
*Memorials were designated for AMAA.
**Bequest Assigned to AMAA.

DAY BY DAY

by Cristina Basmadjian

Editor's note: Cristina's grandfather, Mr. Levon Moumdjian of Montevideo, Uruguay, passed away in 1985. He was a beautiful Christian and had touched the life of Cristina in a meaningful manner. This poem was stimulated by the emotions released at the death of her "grandpa."

In this life there are many roles to play,
Such as trust and obligation.
And sometimes we need a lot of strength
To overcome situations.

Sometimes we'll feel defeated,
Like a bird without its wings.
That's when we start to look around
For someone or something.

When things like this confuse you,
When your "world is coming down,"
Inside yourself you'll see someone
Waiting to be found.

God within your heart and soul
Can help you so much more.
Instead the bird without its wings
Will never learn to soar.

But you have the chance to rebuild your
world,
Believing that God will come through.
He'll always be there to help you and
guide you,
To understand and to love you.

To always remember to look in yourself,
To live your life well and to pray.
That as these times pass you'll grow in
God's faith
Learning a bit day by day.

THESE CHILDREN NEED YOUR HELP



Time is running out for the children of Armenia. Unless we help them now. Today.

The devastation created by the December, 1988 earthquake. The reality of continual border conflict. The real threat of open warfare. The Azerbaijan blockade of rail and other transportation into Armenia—preventing critical supplies from getting in.

This is an issue of basic human sur-

vival. And as always, the most helpless victims are the children.

In an effort to ensure the survival of the next generation, the Armenian Children's Milk Fund has been formed. Our purpose is simple—to fill a basic nutritional need by providing milk and baby formula to Armenia's

most innocent victims. If we don't do it, they won't survive. It's up to us.

Your help is needed *now*. Any contribution will be greatly appreciated. Please rush your check to AMAA/Armenian Children's Milk Fund, 140 Forest Avenue, Paramus, New Jersey 07652

ARMENIAN CHILDREN'S MILK FUND

Armenian Missionary Association of America, Inc.
140 Forest Avenue • Paramus, NJ 07652

Armenian Missionary Association of America
140 Forest Avenue
Paramus, NJ 07652

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